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ABSTRACT

Originating from a concern with the quality of teachers' guides that accompanying English language course books, this report examines the amount of importance they are accorded and the type of information they contain. The first section discusses the demands that the guides' assumptions make on the teacher in terms of the teacher's knowledge, the teacher-learner relationship, teaching techniques, and classroom management. In the second section the focus is on the practical support that teachers require in order to be able to handle communicative materials and on ways in which that support might be supplemented. The third section analyzes the results of a questionnaire that was distributed to practicing English language teachers in a number of countries. Finally, the fourth section presents a framework of basic features that teachers' guides could contain and briefly examines examples of guides written for current English language teaching materials. The framework of basic features includes the following: attitude to language; attitude to language learning and teaching; background information; linguistic information; rationale for methodology; implementation; evaluation; usability; supplementary work; and practical effort. A questionnaire on the use of teachers' guides to English language coursebooks is appended. Contains 50 references. (LB)

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# Teachers' guides: a review of their function

Frank Donoghue

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CLCS Occasional Paper No.30
Spring 1992

# Teachers' guides: a review of their function*

by

Frank Donoghue

## 0 Introduction

This paper originates from a concern with the quality of the teachers' guides which accompany English language course books, the amount of importance that they are generally accorded vis-à-vis the materials they are written for, and the type of information they contain.

Coleman (1985, pp.85-86) points out that little attention is paid to teachers' guides in the literature, either by materials writers or by textbook reviewers. He sees this as an unsatisfactory situation since inadequate teachers' guides will inevitably mean that the materials they accompany are not properly exploited. Coleman's concern is with the evaluation of teachers' guides and he proposes an evaluation instrument (*ibid.*, pp.87-92). He states that the purpose of the instrument is to show how a teachers' guide may be inadequate for non-native-speaker teachers (*ibid*, p.87). Although he does not state it explicitly, it seems that Coleman's idea is that if more attention is paid to the evaluation of teachers' guides in the literature, then more effort will go into the writing of them.

It could be further suggested that it would benefit language learning and teaching in general if some of the energy and time that currently goes into the production of materials for learners was directed towards the improvement of materials for teachers. The

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view expressed in this paper is that, given more attention, teachers' guides could make an important contribution towards the general support that is available to teachers. Where Coleman (1985) is chiefly concerned with evaluating the inadequacies of teachers' guides, I am concerned with improving them. Where Coleman looks at teachers' guides from the perspective of non-native speaker teachers, I wish to consider the potential usefulness of teachers' guides to all types of teachers.

The questions this paper sets out to answer are:

(i) Do teachers need more support, and if so in what areas?

(ii) Can teachers' guides play an important role in providing teacher support?

(iii) If they can, what features would they have to include to be effective?

In the first section of the paper I discuss the demands that these assumptions make on the practising teacher in terms of the teacher's knowledge, the teacher-learner relationship, teaching techniques, and classroom management. The second section is concerned with the practical support that teachers require in order to be able to handle communicative materials, and with ways in which this support might be supplemented. The third section analyses the results of a questionnaire which was distributed to practising English language teachers in a number of countries. Finally, the fourth section presents a framework of basic features which teachers' guides could usefully contain and briefly examines examples of guides written for current English language teaching materials in terms of the framework.

## 1 Demands that communicative materials make on teachers' knowledge and skill

In this section I shall focus on four major factors that together determine the approach the teacher takes in the classroom:

(i) the teacher's knowledge;

(ii) the teacher-learner relationship;

(iii) the methodology and techniques the teacher uses;

(iv) classroom management.

Teachers come to the classroom with ideas and feelings about each of these areas, which have been shaped by their own experiences as learner and teacher, as well as by their training. At the same time, as I hope to show, the materials that the teacher uses in the classroom carry certain implications for each of these areas. The question is, what extra awareness and capacities are required of teachers if they are to implement communicative materials effectively.

### 1.1 The teacher's knowledge

Since the main emphasis of communicative materials is on language as a medium of communication, the teacher must create favourable conditions for realistic communication in the classroom. This implies that the teacher knows what realistic communication involves and that he/she can cause it to be replicated in the learning situation. This involves an understanding on the part of the teacher of the basic psychological and social relationships between, for example, reader and writer or speaker and listener, in various modes, channels and media.

Canale's claim (1983, p.18) that effective communication requires command of four areas of competence — grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic — implies that the teacher should be competent in all four aspects of the target language. Furthermore, Schärer (1985, p.69) makes the point that a good command of the language is necessary for a teacher to be able to cope with the variety and unpredictability of learners' responses in a more open communicative atmosphere. In countries where there is a lack of resources for language teaching, the teacher may be "the only source of English, providing model, input and source of evaluation" (Jarvis 1987, p.180). This puts a heavy burden on the teacher's target language competence.

Emphasis on language as a medium of communication has implications for teacher attitudes. Edelhoff (1984, p.187) comments that teaching a communicative curriculum requires an attitude of "open-mindedness" and "respect for others", especially towards

learners. This is linked to the assumption that communicative teaching and materials are learner-centred. Edelhoff (1985, p.38) notes that teachers need awareness of the nature of language learning, as well as of the background of the learners themselves, their environment and conditioning. This implies that the teacher needs insights into the theory behind the approach to language, language learning and language teaching taken by the materials, as well as an ability to adapt materials for specific groups of learners. It further implies an ability on the part of the teacher to identify the area(s) of competence in which the individual learner is deficient so as to remedy this through teaching.

The assumption that learner autonomy is desirable also has implications for the knowledge of teachers. Learners can only be brought to a state of autonomy if they are shown how to achieve it. Coste (1984, p.133) writes that we cannot simply give autonomy to learners. They have to be trained, and this responsibility falls on the teacher. The implication is that teachers need to be convinced of the value of learner autonomy and armed with the knowledge to prepare learners for it.

The use of communicative materials in the classroom will necessitate adjustment of the roles that learners and teachers have traditionally played. Moreover, the teacher needs to be able to operate in the roles that learner-centredness and learner autonomy require. To some extent these new roles require the teacher to help learners to do things previously regarded as the province of the teacher. For example, Holec (1984, p.156) suggests that the individual learner has to be taught to:

" • define objectives ...
- define contents and progressions to be made ...
- choose methods and techniques ...
- monitor the learning procedure ...
- evaluate what he has acquired and his learning process ...."

However, this does not mean that the teacher simply "withdraws from the centre stage" (Wright 1987, p.112). On the contrary, the teacher needs to know what the new roles are and that these roles are

no less important than the traditional ones. Unless the teacher is shown this, he/she may resist materials which involve such a role change. Moreover, if the teacher does not have the knowledge to prepare learners for these new roles, he/she may meet resistance on their part. I deal with teacher-learner relationships in greater detail in the next section.

The assumption that fluency is just as important as accuracy, and sometimes more so, has important implications for the knowledge of teachers about how and, more importantly, when to focus on either of these. Byrne (1984, p.58) suggests that teachers should not see activities as being either fluency- or accuracy-oriented. Instead, activities can be seen as being on a continuum where the focus might be more on fluency or more on accuracy. In any case, the teacher needs to be able to focus on fluency work as well as on accuracy work.

Another variable that needs to be taken into account, according to Byrne, is the degree of control exercised by the teacher. It is possible to have a fluency activity that is highly teacher-controlled, just as it is possible to have an accuracy activity that is learner-directed. The implication of this is that teachers need to be aware that different combinations of fluency/accuracy and teacher control/learner direction necessitate a different role emphasis. For example, Byrne (*ibid.*, p.59) points out that fluency activities which are learner-directed allow the teacher to play a very important role, that of participant in an activity. Teachers can take part in this type of activity without dominating. However, the problem for many teachers is to learn how to resist dominating and take a non-directive role.

If realistic communication requires the teacher to set up authentic tasks, the teacher needs to be aware of the various ways in which this can be carried out. Byrne (*ibid.*, pp.59-61) lists five approaches to the classroom which make it as much like real life as possible:

- exploiting the classroom as a social setting in its own right
- bringing the outside world into the classroom
- simulating the outside world in the classroom
- escaping from the classroom on an imaginative level
- getting out of the classroom into the outside world.

The point is that the teacher should not be limited to relying on one of these approaches, but needs to be able to draw on all of them. This implies that the teacher should realize the value of and have the confidence and know-how to put into practice a broad range of activities, including role play, games, problem-solving tasks, simulation, drama, story telling and project work. The teacher also needs to be confident in using the target language for authentic interaction in the classroom, for example for the purpose of explaining, exchanging ideas and information, establishing and developing relationships, seeking help, and so on.

An emphasis on authenticity means that teachers need to use texts other than those designed specifically for the classroom. They should be able to select texts from a variety of sources and exploit them in an appropriate way. For example, Edelhoff (1985, p.39) stresses that teachers need to be able to make informed decisions about "the nature and use of texts", to "process texts in different media for different purposes", and finally to be able to "devise and employ differentiated and branching exercises leading the student to carry out communicative tasks in the foreign language".

There is no doubt that using authentic sources can provoke anxiety among teachers. Medgyes (1986, p.110) points out that this emphasis could mean greater insecurity for the teacher in terms of his/her ability to control the systematicity of the course. He also points out that non-native-speaker teachers may worry about losing linguistic control when handling authentic texts. Similar fears may arise when native-speaker teachers are dealing with subject specific texts in a Language for Specific Purposes setting.

In general, communicative materials require that errors be seen in a more positive light. Accordingly, teachers must be aware that there are various ways of evaluating learners' performance and that evaluation has various purposes. For example, as well as exams and assessment by teachers, there is also self-assessment and mutual assessment. In the light of our assumptions about learner autonomy, the teacher should be able involve learners in the evaluation of their own work. This will mean at the very least making learners aware of the criteria used in the evaluation, and may mean negotiating those

criteria with the learners in advance.

A further point to note is that teachers need to be selective when evaluating. Schärer (1985, p.69) writes: "Teachers should be helped to develop an awareness and strategies as to when to correct what, and through this to find a balance between the requirements of fluency and accuracy." In other words, whether correction takes place at all will depend on the activity. The teacher needs to be able to judge what should be evaluated in any activity and to select an appropriate form of evaluation. This may mean simply monitoring learner-directed fluency activities in a very discreet manner for overall communicative effect. On the other hand it may involve a precise focus on one particular grammar point in a controlled piece of writing.

We have already indicated that teachers need to have a good command of the target language, but Canale (1983, p.18) points out that they also need an awareness of language in general and a knowledge of the culture of the target language. Trim (1985, p.22) stresses "the need to integrate linguistic and cultural objectives". His point is that the aim of language teaching is not only to pass on a language, but also to provide general education. This implies that the teacher needs to have access to a broad spectrum of information connected with the language and to be able to pass this on when appropriate.

Since principles like learner-centredness and the use of authentic texts are central to the communicative approach, effective use of communicative materials will inevitably involve a certain amount of innovation and adaptation. Indeed, the teacher will constantly have to make decisions. For example he/she will need to make informed choices of materials and activities, as well as make decisions to eliminate alternatives or re-order activities (Brumfit & Rossner 1982, p.226)

The communicative approach does not imply a fixed set of rules and methods. Indeed, materials and methods are constantly changing, and there is an onus on teachers to remain abreast of these changes. In order for teachers to be able to continue to experiment with methodology and materials, they need to be familiar with diverse

materials and activity types, and also to be flexible enough to employ them in different ways. Teachers, therefore, need to share Edelhoff's view that "Materials and methodology have never been considered to be a closed and perfect system of the management of teaching" (Edelhoff 1985, p.39). This idea that there is no fixed methodology and no fixed set of materials for the communicative approach means that teachers must be aware that teaching should be done with materials rather than through them and that materials should be regarded as means to an end rather than an end in themselves (Wright 1987, pp.76 & 96).

### 1.2 The teacher-learner relationship

We have seen that communicative materials have certain implications for role relationships within the classroom. Wright (1987, p.62, adapted from Barnes 1976) suggests that an important factor in shaping relationships is the view that the teacher is not a transmitter of knowledge, but more a co-interpreter. The teacher will wish to help the learner draw on his/her existing knowledge in order to complete the task in hand. Thus when teaching language as a medium of communication, a sharing of responsibility for learning between teacher and learner is necessary.

The teacher-learner relationship will be greatly affected by the learner-centred approach in that communicative objectives are in principle negotiable. This implies that the teacher needs to encourage the learner to play a genuine role as co-negotiator in determining the content of lessons and the nature of materials to be used and in monitoring his/her own progress (van Ek 1985, p.33). Learner-centredness could be seen by teachers as causing an imbalance in the relationship with learners and even as a threat to their authority. This may be linked to the fact that in communicative materials the emphasis is no longer on the "all-knowing" position of the teacher. As a result of this some teachers could experience problems, particularly those with large classes, especially if they are teaching for short contact periods and are themselves lacking in training. Therefore teachers need methods of coping with difficult classroom situations that allow varied role relationships but also permit the teacher to

impose an orderly learning atmosphere.

With the idea of learner autonomy must come the implication that the learner does not have to go through the teacher to gain access to knowledge, but can him/herself, with assistance, go directly to the source of that knowledge. McDermott (1984, p.38) sees it as an important part of the teacher's job to bridge the gap between the classroom and the outside world by gradually leading learners away from "the relative safety of the teacher/student interchange". The implication is that the teacher needs to develop techniques to foster this shift in relationship and wean learners away from teacher-dependence. McDermott (*ibid.*) suggests that carefully planned and monitored problem-solving tasks are one means of achieving this.

Edelhoff (1985, p.38) comments on the teacher's role: "Language teaching for communication requires a teacher who regards himself as a facilitator, an adviser and a counsellor rather than as an instructor and an assessor." In other words, the teacher needs to recognize the sharing relationship he/she is involved in with the learner in so far as they are both discovering language and knowledge together. Indeed, Edelhoff points out that the non-native-speaker teacher of a foreign language is basically in the same position as the learner of the language and that differences between the two are relative.

Medgyes (1986, pp.109f.) suggests that the communicative approach requires the teacher on the one hand to withdraw so that the learners have space to exercise their own initiative, but on the other hand to maintain a high level of "control" over the class: "This withdrawn-and-yet-all-present attitude requires of communicative teachers an extremely high degree of personal subtlety and professional sophistication." Difficult though it may be, the teacher needs to be able to switch roles quickly and easily, depending on the demands of the activity.

Changing attitudes towards evaluation have obvious consequences for the teacher-learner relationship. The teacher needs to be able to bring the learner to the point where he/she does not see evaluation as a judgemental or negative activity, but rather as a helpful and positive process from which he/she can benefit.

Evaluation should be a shared process and teachers need to allow learners to participate in the evaluation of their own and each other's work.

### 1.3 Methodology and techniques

While assumptions that we make about language, language learning, and language teaching clearly affect methodology, there is no fixed methodology specified by the communicative approach. Littlewood (1983, p.1) writes: "Since communicative refers primarily to learning goals, there is no single, fully worked-out teaching system that bears the label 'communicative'." Consequently, any number of different techniques, methods and activities can be employed in the communicative classroom in pursuit of the communicative goal. Teachers need to be able to implement a range of techniques and select the best techniques for particular groups of learners.

As the communicative approach is concerned with teaching language as a medium of communication, and since knowledge about the target language alone is no longer considered sufficient for its effective use, teachers can no longer expect to rely only on techniques such as controlled drills and the explanation of rules. Learners must also have the opportunity to use language in a less focused way, in authentic tasks which are intrinsically interesting and not simply vehicles for language learning. For example, Littlewood (1984, p.92) outlines a methodological framework which consists of a two-part approach. On the one hand this approach involves "pre-communicative activities" which provide part-skill training and help learners to master separate aspects of the language "through either cognitive techniques (e.g. explanations, grammar exercises) or habit-forming techniques (e.g. repetition, drills)". On the other hand the approach involves "communicative activities" which provide whole-task practice and "help learners to integrate their separate sub-skills into an effective system for communicating meanings", as well as providing the opportunity for the learner to acquire language through natural processes. Clearly, the teacher needs to be able to decide whether a communicative or a pre-communicative activity is suitable for a particular purpose and to achieve a balance between the two

broad activity types.

Learner-centredness has implications for the methods and techniques a teacher employs in the classroom. Edelhoff (1985, p.37) comments: "Language learning for communication needs a teacher [...] who is capable of linking the target language classroom activities with the lives and learning potential of his students." Teachers must take into account the knowledge and interests of learners when selecting and, where appropriate, adapting activities and materials. They may not always see this as a straightforward task. For example, Medgyes (1986, p.108) points out that teachers may have a difficult job if a group of learners does not have easily identifiable needs or if personal differences within the group are very great. He concludes that the task of communicative teachers in this regard is immense. At the same time teachers need to know how to delegate to their learners some of the responsibility for selecting materials and activities.

As one of the aims of communicative teaching is to promote learner autonomy, there will be a need to use activities which foster this. The teacher needs to know which types of activity are likely to promote autonomy and how to implement them to the best effect. For example, one way of introducing autonomy into the classroom is to have learners use media. But if media are available, the teacher needs to be able to set up activities that exploit their potential to give learners access to knowledge and information without going through the teacher. Examples of suitable techniques could be self-access with computer, video or interactive video; jigsaw listening/reading work; and activities which involve problem-solving using media as input.

We have already noted that teachers need to have various evaluation strategies at their disposal. Medgyes (1986, p.108) points out a potential problem when he suggests that teachers have to focus on meaning and form simultaneously when checking learners' performance. A teacher who tries to do this will certainly have problems. Thus the teacher needs to be able to match an appropriate evaluation technique with the activity he/she is evaluating. This involves being able to decide what aspect of the activity needs to be evaluated, informing the learners of the focus for evaluation, and negotiating suitable criteria with the learners.

Schärer (1985, p.67) implies that teachers need to be flexible in their approach and to adjust their methods to accommodate different language learning aims, different learners and different teaching situations. Even in the situation where the teacher is restricted, for example through materials which are not communicative, a broad repertoire of teaching techniques, and the confidence and knowledge to apply them, can enable the teacher to teach in a communicative way.

### 1.4 Classroom management

Arguably the ability of the teacher to manage and organize the classroom will be the most important factor in determining what goes on there. As Jarvis notes: "Teachers may, of course, be influenced by the views of language incorporated in the textbook followed, but we have found that teachers' implementation skills may override or vitiate any textbook writer's aims" (Jarvis 1987, p.180). Indeed, this may be the reason why Byrne (1984, p.60) found that simulations are not widely used: even if teachers are persuaded of their value, they may not have the skills to implement them. Nolasco and Arthur (1986, p.100) describe a situation where teachers who were convinced of the value of communicative methodology felt that the reality of teaching classes of forty learners or more ruled against the application of this methodology in the classroom. The reasons Nolasco and Arthur give for the resistance of teachers are discipline, physical constraints, lack of duplicating facilities, and student resistance (*ibid.*, p.103). They suggest that the teachers ought to have been able to tailor their classroom management skills to overcome such difficulties. These examples suggest that teachers should be skilled in classroom management as this plays a vital role in the success or failure of any materials.

In the interest of meaningful and realistic communication in the classroom the teacher must be able to "set tasks clearly, expand learner utterances, influence behaviour and summarize points made" (Jarvis 1987, p.180). Jarvis suggests that this is particularly difficult for non-native-speaker teachers. However, it could be argued that native speakers may also have difficulty in formulating clear and

effective classroom language. Jarvis also claims that if the teacher does not have access to this language he/she is more likely to rely on a more teacher-centred style.

In order to set up varied types of interaction in the classroom the teacher needs to be familiar with and able to implement a variety of ways of organizing the learner group. Depending on the activity, he/she may favour one or more organizing strategy, for example pair work, group work, whole-class or individual work. With each of these there are various possible seating arrangements that the teacher needs to be able to control and manage quickly and efficiently.

Each type of organization entails different types of relationship within the classroom and consequently different patterns of communication. A change in grouping can allow teachers and learners to adopt different roles within the lesson. This means that teachers have to be skilled in the art of matching activities with appropriate types of organization. Jarvis is concerned that classroom management should be effected in such a way that it is acceptable both culturally and socially. The teacher must have a two-sided awareness. On the one hand, classroom management needs to suit the methodology, and on the other hand, it needs to be suited to local conditions. Again the teacher must be learner-centred in his/her approach. Thus, for example, a native-speaker teacher of English as a foreign language working abroad may have to adapt his/her approach to classroom management to suit the norms of the local classroom.

Nolasco and Arthur (1986, p.102) suggest that learners' expectations of the role of teachers and of teaching methods may cause them to reject new forms of classroom management initially. In addition, teachers' awareness of learners' expectations may prevent them from introducing certain types of classroom management to avoid tensions and conflict. Nolasco and Arthur suggest that this type of situation may sometimes mean that there has to be an implementation plan to allow new forms of classroom management to be introduced gradually. The implications of this are that teachers need to be sensitive to learners' expectations of classroom procedure and to be aware that they are responsible for explaining the rationale behind their methods and the classroom organization they employ. Nolasco

and Arthur (*ibid.*) give an example of introducing group and pair work to learners gradually over ten weeks in a situation where this form of classroom management was previously unknown and likely to be resisted. Their example suggests that forethought is important to avoid tensions which could hinder the running of activities.

Maclennan (1987, p.193) argues that lesson planning and classroom management should be interwoven with one another. Her view is that classroom management should not merely be a matter of instant decision making, but should involve advance planning in terms of appropriate selection. Her main point is that teachers must be aware of the consequences that choosing certain activities will have for classroom management. Part of the skill of teaching involves being able to sequence activities which "settle" and activities which "unsettle" classes, activities which involve learners and activities which merely occupy them.

If a teacher is not confident in managing classroom interaction, then the result, as Jarvis (1987, p.180) points out, will be a decrease in the quality of the learning opportunities available to the learner. She suggests that in order for communicative materials to be implemented in the most effective way, the teacher should be able to:

1. set tasks clearly and make them meaningful and purposeful to the learners;
2. show the learners any necessary steps in achieving the tasks, and what their outcomes are expected to be;
3. encourage learner participation, and organize the class so that learner work takes up a large proportion of the available time;
4. give clear and encouraging feedback to the learners on their attempts;
5. correct mistakes gently;
6. clarify/summarize/expand learner talk as necessary;
7. convey a sense of "teacher approachability";
8. convey high expectations of what his or her learners can do;
9. teach English through English. (*ibid.*, p.181)

## 1.5 Conclusions

Clearly, the communicative approach makes heavy demands on teachers in terms of their knowledge of the theory of language, language learning and language teaching; their knowledge and skill as users of the target language; their ability to establish and monitor a variety of productive relationships in the classroom; their understanding of the rationale behind teaching methods; their ability to implement the techniques and activities associated with them; and their adeptness in controlling the physical classroom environment and the group dynamics within it.

If there is resistance on the part of teachers to adopting the communicative approach or to implementing communicative materials wholeheartedly, then this could be due to the fact that there is no one communicative methodology. There is potentially a lot of freedom for teachers, but as we have seen, they need to be well prepared for this freedom. While the diversified role of the teacher is certainly one of the strengths of the communicative approach, it may also be seen by teachers as one of its greatest threats, if they do not have sufficient training and guidance.

In the same vein, Trim (1985, p.23) comments that teachers will be understandably resistant to new processes if they are not equipped to manage them. Schärer (1985, p.67) and Medgyes (1986) agree that the demands of the communicative approach are greatest on non-native-speaker teachers because of the linguistic skills required. Schärer (*ibid.*) also points out that untrained teachers may find it difficult to cope with the high pedagogical demands of the learner-centred approach.

Commenting on the dynamic nature of communicative methodology and materials, Holden (1984, p.43) warns of the possibility that the constant emergence of new theories and materials could be demoralizing for teachers, rather than stimulating, if they do not have sufficient time and opportunity to study, discuss and evaluate these developments as they occur.

Jarvis (1987, p.181) points out that lack of classroom management skills is not the fault of individual teachers. She lays the blame for poor implementation of communicative methods and materials on

systems of training and lack of support for teachers in the form of effective models. This idea is taken up in the following sections, which examine the extent to which training and other forms of support are sufficient to enable teachers to implement communicative materials effectively.

## 2 Teacher support

This section examines the kind of practical support that teachers might need if they are to use communicative materials effectively. It will be particularly concerned to establish how far available support can take account of

- the difficulties experienced by teachers due to the constantly changing nature of communicative materials;
- the high demands that these materials make on teachers' knowledge and skills;
- the resistance that teachers may feel towards the materials.

### 2.1 Minimal support

What kind of support do teachers minimally need? Edelhoff (1985) proposes that an important part of teacher support is in-service teacher education and training (INSET). Ideally, this will provide "all kinds of job-oriented learning activities for teachers in service". Edelhoff does not prescribe the form this should take, but suggests that it can be organized individually, privately or collectively, and can make use of such means as individual study, books, media, correspondence materials, informal and formal groups, and courses. Edelhoff also emphasizes that INSET is most effective when it is "geared to the needs of teachers and actual classroom activities" (*ibid.*). He stresses that a teacher education programme should develop in trainees an awareness of the preconceptions they have about their teaching situation and its constraints and about their own group behaviour. The teacher's own learning should embody the principles professed by the communicative approach which he/she is being trained to teach, for example learner autonomy and self-

management. Edelhoff stresses the need for this kind of teacher education to take place over a long period of time, preferably permanently.

### 2.2 Present and future demands

At this point it is perhaps worth noting a distinction made by Larsen-Freeman (quoted in Finocchiaro 1984, p.30) between teacher training and teacher education. Training focuses on a particular learning situation, and therefore has finite objectives; its main aim is to enable the trainee to meet immediate and specific classroom needs. It provides models and, initially at least, the trainees are expected to adhere closely to these, so that the criteria for success in training are closely specified. This kind of support can be valuable to the teacher in his/her current situation, dealing with current and specific materials. However, there is the possibility that it may not be of much use when objectives, methodologies and materials change.

Teacher education, on the other hand, is broader in scope. Since materials and methodologies are never static, it is clearly important for teachers to be able to cope with innovation. The goal of teacher education is the development of the "whole person" who needs to be able to make informed choices concerning materials, methods and techniques. This preparation aims to provide the trainee with the ability to cope with any situation and to develop in him/her the capacity to seek knowledge from sources without help, define problems, establish objectives, make decisions, and assess the outcome of a learning programme.

Finocchiaro (1984, p.31) stresses the importance of both teacher training and teacher education as a means of preparing the trainee for the immediate as well as the future demands of the classroom.

### 2.3 Preparing teachers for new developments

Section 1 attempted to assess the demands made on teachers by recent shifts in thinking on language learning and language teaching. Schärer (1985, p.68) points out that teacher training needs to facilitate such shifts. For example, if teachers are required to be sensitive to learners' needs, to encourage learner autonomy and to promote

language as a medium of communication, "then the teacher training experience itself must incorporate these concepts and must be perceived by the teacher as positive and worthwhile" (*ibid.*, p.69).

Britten (1987, p.3) highlights the trainee teacher's need to "outgrow not only ideas about teaching and learning foreign languages which were acquired as pupils in school only a few years earlier, but also perhaps previous ideas about the nature of language and what it means to know a language." He warns of the common danger of teachers being greatly influenced by models of teaching picked up in the past.

It is generally the aim of training programmes to develop new models for trainees and to ensure that trainees become in some way personally committed to them. Britten (*ibid.*, pp.5ff.) argues that in order to achieve this aim a training programme must set out to shape trainees' attitudes. By suggesting that models need to be provided, Britten is clearly advocating support for the "here and now" situation of the teacher; by suggesting that teachers' attitudes need to be changed, he is concerned with the education of teachers for future developments.

### 2.4 Promoting self-reliance and self-appraisal

Britten (1987, p.5) outlines a pre-service training programme which aims to lead the trainee to the point where he/she is able to deal with full classes, integrating all of the skills and learning objectives, as well as planning and assessing his/her lessons independently. A key capacity that learners need to develop is autonomy. This requires the trainee to move away from a state of dependence on the trainer's supervision and peer support to a state of self-reliance and self-confidence. Britten (*ibid.*, p.6) emphasizes that as a result of the training programme, the trainee should be in a position where he/she will maintain attitudes acquired during training, will be able to resist reversion to old models and resist pressure from more conservative colleagues.

Britten's three-stage pre-service course seems to take account of the difficulties facing teachers that we outlined at the beginning of this section, viz. the changing nature of communicative materials, the

demands that materials make on teachers, and the resistance of teachers to new materials.

However, according to Bolitho (1984, p.22), if the support provided by training is not sufficient, there is a risk that teachers will develop a low self-image. Bolitho suggests that this is a result of a lack of ability on the part of the teacher to conduct objective self-appraisal. Instead teachers are likely to rely on introspection, informal feedback from colleagues and learners, or occasional inspectors' visits for information on which to base their self-image. Bolitho's answer to this is to train teachers to rely on colleagues and learners for information, but in a purposeful and objective way. He argues that unless teachers have a means of improving their self-image and self-confidence, there is a danger that they will be easily overwhelmed by "outside experts" and that they will be "too ready to accept unquestioningly the syllabi, textbooks and other materials they are expected to work with" (*ibid.*, p.23).

### 2.5 Theory *versus* practice

Bolitho (1984, p.24) highlights a problem with present teacher training. He suggests that it is heavily theory-based, and furthermore that the theoretical input is not determined in consultation with the teachers themselves. He argues that on pre-service courses the theory trainees are confronted with may be somewhat irrelevant and confusing to people with little or no experience of teaching. On in-service courses, the theory may serve to confound teachers with practical classroom experience who have no means of linking theory and practice.

Bolitho (*ibid.*) questions the practicality of a suggestion by Widdowson (1984) that teachers should continuously appraise what they do in the classroom in the light of principles of language learning theory. He feels that these principles are not made sufficiently accessible to teachers. He sees one answer to this "theory *versus* practice" issue in self-help groups (*ibid.*, p.25). A vital aspect of this idea is that discussion of pedagogical problems and approaches should begin at classroom and school level. Bolitho is clearly concerned that teachers should have direct influence over the shaping of the

support that they receive.

### 2.6 Teacher involvement in innovation

With regard to the idea that teachers need to be prepared to cope with changes and developments in materials and methods, Kennedy (1987, pp.163ff.) makes the point that all teacher education programmes must involve some form of innovation. He urges that this innovation needs to be managed by those affected by it. They should make decisions about "the degree and manner of change they wish to accept" (*ibid.*, p.164). This is what Kennedy calls a "normative-re-educative" strategy, which is based on the idea that accepting change may require changes to deep-seated beliefs and behaviour. As a result there is a need for a collaborative approach to teacher support which involves teachers directly.

There is a further very important aspect of this strategy for change: "It is an approach which is concerned not only with the adoption of a specific innovation, but with the process of development that individuals experience as a result of involvement, and which can lead to a continuing interest in further change and evaluation" (*ibid.*). This is a central idea if we are to achieve the type of teacher education which equips teachers to cope with change and innovation in the future.

### 2.7 Is training sufficient?

So far most of the writers we have referred to have considered support mainly in the form of training, either initial or in-service. However, we would argue that training, even in its most ideal form, has its limitations. Girard (1985, p.59) suggests that language teachers need ever-increasing amounts of theoretical knowledge, yet initial training tends to get left behind and as a result its content gradually becomes at least partly obsolete. Brumfit and Rossner (1982, p.227) point out that although one of the functions of teacher training is to lead teachers "to question and revise fundamental assumptions about the nature of education", this is not possible until teachers have had adequate experience of the classroom. This suggests serious limitations to pre-service training. Britten (1988, p.6) points to "transfer

of training" as being a cause of problems for pre-service courses. As we have already seen, he is concerned about newly trained teachers being influenced by past learning experiences and by more conservative colleagues, and thus not putting into practice methods and techniques they have encountered in training.

These limitations need to be borne in mind, especially as pre-service training often gets the lion's share of resources. More continuous forms of teacher support tend to get less attention. In-service training has advantages in so far as it can engage teachers in development over a longer period, can update their pre-service training, and allows them to draw on their classroom experience. However, Trim mentions the danger of attempting to teach teachers what they already know unless in-service courses are based on precise information about the state of teachers' current knowledge and their needs (Trim 1985, p.26).

A further limitation on in-service courses is time. They normally have to be short to fit in with teachers' timetables and they are therefore limited in what they can achieve. As a result, there is the possibility that they will go no further than to stimulate awareness in teachers, and will fail to provide sufficient training. To be of real use, support for teachers needs to be more comprehensive and more continuous.

Another problem with in-service training is that it does not always get to the people who need it most. Courses tend to be voluntary and may be attended by teachers who are already convinced of the need to update their knowledge and skills. Bolitho (1984, p.23) warns that many teachers consider that outside constraints are so great that it is not worth trying to undertake any self-improvement. People are likely to blame such factors as "the inadequacy of textbooks, over-large classes, poor motivation of learners, the tyranny of the syllabus, high teaching load and the influence of 'conservative colleagues'."

### 2.8 Extra support

Our argument so far suggests that we need to supplement the support that training provides, and that in order to be worthwhile

any extra support needs to fulfil a number of requirements. It should:

- be available to all teachers;
- be accessible to all teachers;
- provide support which is constantly available to teachers;
- be practical in terms of the time, cost and effort involved;
- give practical classroom-based support geared to the needs of teachers;
- satisfy the immediate needs and also the broader needs of teachers;
- offer information on current trends;
- have the potential to be up-dated;
- allow teachers to go beyond the models it provides and develop their own techniques;
- encourage in teachers a critical and questioning attitude towards materials and methods;
- make explicit the link between materials and methods, and the theories behind them;
- embody in its form the principles of the materials it accompanies.

### 2.9 Guides and handbooks

Schärer (1985, p.70) suggests that one form of supplementary support could be written material which explains major concepts to classroom teachers and is designed for use in seminars or for teachers' own personal use. Written material has the advantage over training that it is more easily disseminated and therefore should have the capacity to reach more teachers. But this still does not get over some of the problems that we have noted with training, in particular:

- we cannot guarantee that all teachers will actually pick up such materials;
- such materials may not be classroom-based and therefore not immediately usable by teachers.

Thus we are still looking for a means of support for teachers which meets our criteria.

### 2.10 Teachers' guides

It is at least arguable that teachers' guides can make a substantial contribution to providing this kind of support. They have an advantage over general handbooks in that they are more likely to be used by all teachers since they accompany the materials which are being used in the classroom. Furthermore guides can be picked up and used at will, in answer to a particular need. There is no pressure on teachers to use them, but they are generally considered to provide support, at least in so far as they are a short cut to lesson preparation. On the face of it they are likely to be widely used, and if they contain the appropriate kind of information, they have the potential to fulfil the criteria listed above.

To return now to the questions posed at the beginning of this section about different types of support, I suggest:

- that teachers' guides can help alleviate the difficulties experienced by teachers due to the constantly changing nature of communicative materials, since guides are written by the authors of materials and accompany the materials right from the start;
- that a good teachers' guide will not make inappropriate demands on teachers' knowledge and skill, but on the contrary, contribute towards their increase and towards teachers' general development;
- that teachers' resistance to new methods will be reduced if the guides give clear and practical assistance in the implementation of materials.

### 2.11 Conclusions

Having suggested that teachers' guides could in principle contribute towards teachers' continuing education, it is necessary to establish whether they are used by teachers, what they are used for, and whether teachers regard them as essential support. There are three possible scenarios:

- teachers use guides and get the necessary support from them;
- teachers use guides but feel that they could get more support from them;
- teachers do not use guides.

The next section reports the views of practising teachers on teachers' guides with these questions in mind.

## 3 Teachers' views on guides

Section 1 concluded by suggesting that the blame for poor implementation of communicative methodology could perhaps be attributed to the lack of adequate support for teachers in the form of effective models. Section 2 concluded that for a variety of reasons teachers' guides have the potential to make a substantial contribution to this support. Yet it is our suspicion that many current teachers' guides fall short in this function. Coleman (1985, p.93) suggests that "many TGs (teachers' guides) appear to be little more than incidental afterthoughts", and he goes on to say that less care seems to be taken in the preparation of teachers' guides than with the writing of materials for learners. My own experience of using guides and opinions that I have heard expressed informally by other teachers would lend support to Coleman's view. It therefore seemed worthwhile to establish in a more formal way how teachers regard the guides available to them. The aim was to establish the extent to which teachers' guides actually do provide the back-up that teachers need if they are to implement communicative materials and how far they can go in supplementing the support that training already provides.

### 3.1 Methods

The best means of finding out the extent to which guides are used is, of course, to ask teachers. However, personal interviews were out of the question for this research, partly because of the time that would have been involved, and partly because this method of data collection would have restricted the range of teachers and teaching situations investigated. The best solution seemed to be to conduct a survey by sending a questionnaire by post to as large a number of countries and as wide a variety of teaching situations as was feasible. (The questionnaire is printed in the appendix.)

A total of 95 questionnaires in bundles of between five and ten

copies were sent to personal acquaintances, all of whom were involved in English language teaching. They were asked to distribute the questionnaires to colleagues. The countries targeted were Britain, Brunei, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Morocco, Senegal and Singapore. The range of teaching situations included English as a Second Language at secondary level, English for Specific Purposes to adults at language schools, general English as a Foreign Language to adults, English as a Foreign Language at secondary level, and English for Academic Purposes at university level. The questionnaires were sent to non-native-speaker as well as native-speaker teachers.

By distributing the questionnaire to a large number of teaching situations in eleven countries it was hoped to achieve a broad sample. However, this might be considered to be a disadvantage in that the teachers were in such different situations, using different materials, operating under different constraints. It could be argued that it is difficult to generalize about the results. On the other hand, it was felt that it would be useful to have a broad sample in order to test for general trends in the use of guides. If indeed the results did show similar general trends, then they would be all the stronger for this diversity of sample.

By sending the questionnaire to acquaintances and asking them to distribute and collect the forms, it was hoped to achieve a fairly high response rate. One disadvantage of this method of distribution was that my acquaintances were likely to distribute questionnaires to teachers who they felt would probably fill them in, and this might produce biased responses.

Clearly, sending questionnaires by post meant that no dialogue with the co-operating teachers was possible. Using prior knowledge of the target countries and target situations, care was taken with the wording of the questionnaire to ensure that as far as possible the questions would be relevant to all the teachers and that they would be able to respond in a standard way. It was considered important to keep open-ended questions to a minimum, partly to make the filling-in of the questionnaire as quick and easy as possible, and partly to make sure that responses were expressed in such a way that we could

generalize about them. The one disadvantage of this is that teachers did not have much opportunity to expand on or justify their responses. Thus there was a danger that the opinions of the designer of the questionnaire would show through in the results.

Still anticipating some problems of interpretation among the co-operating teachers, I felt I could rely on my contacts to clear these up. Therefore letters were sent to the distributors, indicating as far as possible likely problem areas, explaining what was wanted, and asking them to make sure that teachers understood what was required. Needless to say, some problems of interpretation came to light only during the processing of the responses. These will be dealt with in the section on results. However, the general impression was that on the whole the questionnaire was interpreted as desired.

The overall purpose of the questionnaire was to test two hypotheses: (i) that teachers welcome support from teachers' guides; and (ii) that the support provided by teachers' guides could be improved upon. The questionnaire was designed in four sections. The first section was intended to provide a profile of collaborating teachers, particularly the extent of their experience, whether or not they were native speakers of English, and whether or not they had been trained. The second section sought to establish whether or not there were identifiable styles of teaching among the collaborating teachers. It was felt that questions on classroom management, types of activities, and choice of materials would give us some indicators of style. The third section was designed to find out to what extent guides were available, to what extent teachers used them, and whether the existing guides provided what the teachers felt they needed. The fourth section attempted to establish a profile of an ideal guide, who it should be aimed at, and what it should contain.

### 3.2 Results

Of the 95 copies of the questionnaire that were sent out, 78 were returned. Two were spoilt, leaving a total sample of 76.

Teachers in the sample varied in three main ways, depending on whether they were: (i) native speakers or non-native speakers; (ii) highly experienced or less experienced; and (iii) trained or untrained.

The sample gave a good spread over these categories: 55% were native and 45% were non-native speakers; 63% were highly experienced and 37% were less experienced; and 71% were trained and 29% were untrained.

It was decided to classify teachers with 0-5 years' experience as less experienced teachers and teachers with anything above 5 years' experience as highly experienced. To some extent this was an arbitrary decision taken to facilitate interpretation of the results. However, it does seem that a minimum of 5 years' experience is generally considered desirable for more senior teaching positions. Therefore it was felt that this might be an appropriate cut-off point.

Clearly, what we regard as relevant teacher training has influenced the result. The category "teacher training" in question 3, "What qualifications have you got?", was intended to cover types of formation which provide training in classroom techniques and assessment of teacher performance in the classroom. It is worth noting that the percentage of native-speaker teachers who were trained (76%) was very similar to the percentage for non-native-speaker teachers (69%). Another statistic from this section which is worth mentioning is that 82% of the sample had had recent training in some form. This included teachers who had recently qualified, who had recently completed in-service courses, or who had recently upgraded their training. Indeed, from the figures we can establish that 64% of the experienced teachers had recently had training. This might confirm the suspicion expressed earlier that our sample teachers tended to be the more committed and enthusiastic ones.

It was interesting to note how many teachers did not make significant use of available books and periodicals on English language teaching. While the overwhelming majority of teachers said that they had access to such literature, a relatively large proportion made no significant use of them. Reading 0-5 books or articles in 12 months was interpreted as constituting no significant use. Whereas 96% of respondents reported that they had access to books and periodicals, 43% made no significant use of such resources.

As regards teaching styles, there was a tendency for native-speaker teachers to speak more English in the classroom and for them

to require their students to speak to each other in English more often than non-native speaker teachers. The amount of English used by teachers in the classroom was as follows:

| Use of English in classroom | Native-speaker teachers | Non-native-speaker teachers |
|---|---|---|
| 100% | 76% | 44% |
| 75% | 17% | 59% |
| 50% | 0% | 3% |
| 25% | 2% | 0% |

The amount that teachers required learners to speak English to each other in the classroom was:

| Learners required to speak English in classroom | Native-speaker teachers | Non-native-speaker teachers |
|---|---|---|
| often | 71% | 47% |
| sometimes | 21% | 47% |
| never | 2% | 0% |

Clearly, there can be a number of reasons for these differences between native and non-native-speaker teachers. For instance, it may often be the case that the non-native-speaker teacher does not have a good command of the students' mother tongue and as a result relies more heavily on English. While it would not be justified to draw strong conclusions from these figures, it is possible that these non-native speakers might use more English and require more English to be used by students if they were linguistically more confident, or if the guides gave more support of this kind.

It should be noted that the more experienced teachers as a whole were less inclined to use English in the classroom:

| Use of English in the classroom | Less experienced teachers | More experienced teachers |
|---|---|---|
| 100% | 82% | 50% |
| 75% | 18% | 46% |
| 50% | 0% | 2% |
| 25% | 0% | 2% |

It is interesting to note that the sample contained 24 experienced non-native-speaker teachers and 24 experienced native-speaker teachers. This therefore might be an indicator of the fact that recent initial training has put more stress on the importance of the language of classroom interaction as input for learners. It might also mean that teachers trained in the past need more support with classroom management. Thus we might consider whether guides could provide this type of support.

It is difficult to get a real indication of teaching style from the results of the questionnaire. We need to be aware of the possibility that teachers may give the answer they feel is required, rather than an entirely accurate one. Yet it is perhaps just as significant to find out what teachers feel should be happening in classrooms as what really goes on.

The use of rows is interpreted as being an indicator of the extent of "up-front" teaching. While teaching in horse-shoe formation can be equally "up-front" and teacher-dominated, it at least allows more student-student contact. It is striking that 81% of untrained teachers used rows and that they were less inclined to use alternative seating arrangements than trained teachers:

| Classroom arrangement | Trained teachers | Untrained teachers |
|---|---|---|
| rows | 66% | 81% |
| horse-shoe | 53% | 36% |
| groups/pairs | 53% | 45% |
| other | 9% | 1% |

Experience of teaching also seemed to make a difference to the types of seating arrangements that teachers chose to use. In general, the experienced teacher tended to use a greater variety of arrangements than the inexperienced teacher, who seemed to rely heavily on one type. This could mean that the less experienced teacher did not have the confidence to vary.

| Classroom arrangement | Highly experienced teachers | Less experienced teachers |
|---|---|---|
| rows | 77% | 61% |
| horse-shoe | 58% | 32% |
| groups/pairs | 60% | 39% |
| other | 11% | 10% |

Finally, it is also striking that 52% of native-speaker teachers but 94% of non-native-speaker teachers used rows.

All in all, there does seem to be an argument for including in a guide practical hints on quick and efficient ways of arranging the classroom to suit communicative activities.

With question 9, which focussed on the activities used in teaching, it was hoped to differentiate more precisely between teaching styles and to establish, for example, whether or not the teachers in the sample taught in a communicative way. In fact, the results are not very helpful and few important trends emerge. However, it is interesting to note what kind of activities teachers considered it important to use. More than 75% said that they used authentic texts, read for main points, did reading comprehension exercises, taught guessing meaning of vocabulary from context, did grammar exercises, used role-play and simulations, and used pair/group discussions.

Teachers did not seem to spend much time on drama, self-access work or project work. This may have been because these activities are difficult to set up. It is interesting that more trained teachers (41%) than untrained teachers (18%) and more experienced teachers (42%)

than less experienced teachers (25%) said that they did project work.

One more interesting detail is the variation in the figures for grammar exercises between the less experienced and more experienced teachers: 54% of the less experienced but 83% of the more experienced teachers used grammar exercises. These figures might suggest that the less experienced, and probably more recently trained, teachers had been influenced by the trend away from grammatical explanation and possibly lacked a basis for grammar work. In spite of the de-emphasis of grammar in the audio-lingual approach, more experienced teachers who might have been trained in this methodology, seemed to have a better knowledge of grammar. This might be because their own experience of language learning, foreign or mother tongue, provided them with this basis. If the less experienced teachers lacked this basis, they might have benefited from extra support in this area.

The question on the materials used by teachers yielded a long list of course books with little overlap except for a few standard language school textbooks. When we come to consider the uniformity of teachers' views on the guides that accompany the course books that they used, it seems very significant that such similar feelings could be expressed about such a wide variety of books.

89% of the respondents said that there were teachers' guides available for at least some of the textbooks they used. Most of the teachers who indicated that guides were not available were teachers of English as a Second Language in the secondary system who were not actually using language course books. A significant number of teachers who had guides available used them once or twice a week or more (68%), and this percentage is almost the same for non-native-speaker as for native-speaker teachers. Similarly, 69% of native-speaker and 67% of non-native-speaker teachers, 67% of experienced and 77% of less experienced teachers, and 72% of trained and 66% of untrained teachers reported that they used guides at least once or twice a week.

Only 3% of teachers to whom guides were available did not use them at all. These teachers indicated that the guides did not contain what they needed.

A substantial minority of teachers (39%) seemed to consider present guides only average or less than helpful in the assistance they provided. What is more, only 9% of respondents said they did not think that guides could be improved.

The reasons that respondents most often gave for using teachers' guides were: answers to questions in the course book (73%); tapescripts for listening texts (70%); ideas on how to use the course book (78%); background information (63%).

All types of teachers covered by the survey made regular use of teachers' guides, and the vast majority felt that guides could provide more support. This seems to confirm the feeling that teachers' guides would be a good way of reaching teachers and supplying them with the support that they may need.

In response to the question "Who do you think teachers' guides could be helpful to?", 74% of native-speaker responses indicated that guides could be helpful to native-speaker teachers. In addition, 81% of experienced teachers felt that guides could be helpful to experienced teachers. As regards what guides should contain, there was a strong call for answers, tapescripts, suggestions on how to use the course book, background information, ideas for teaching and expanding vocabulary, and ideas for activities outside the course book.

As far as the different teacher types are concerned, there are some variations. It is difficult to comment on many of these variations because the questionnaire does not give us enough detail. For example, 98% of the native-speaker teachers felt that tapescripts for listening exercises were vital, as compared with only 62% of non-native-speaker teachers. We might guess that this variation was caused by the amount of listening material that teachers had available, but we cannot be sure.

Of the teachers who said they needed background information, 94% were non-native and 64% were native speakers. It seems reasonable to assume that the non-native-speaker teachers required more background information because they were less familiar with the background culture of the language. However, it is interesting that a relatively high percentage of native-speaker teachers also wanted this type of information.

Not surprisingly, fewer experienced than less experienced teachers (42% compared with 68%) wanted to have extra exercises provided for them in the teachers' guide. The position is similar regarding suggestions for monitoring oral work: 50% of the less experienced teachers required these as compared to 27% of the experienced teachers.

As regards when teachers would expect to use a good teachers' guide, all respondents replied that they would use it during lesson preparation and 13% said they would use it in the lesson. This second figure might have consequences for how the teachers' guide should be presented, e.g. as a separate book or interleaved with the student's book, in a large or a small format.

Finally, it is worth noting that no teacher indicated that he/she would not use a guide provided that it was good. Many teachers took the opportunity to express their desire for better guides containing a maximum amount of information. Among their comments were the following:

- help to clarify anomalies
- role-plays
- references for books that could be used by teachers, e.g. grammars
- suggestions for games, drama, songs and further reading
- further questions on texts
- supplementary texts
- short stories
- prediction of language interference problems from the mother tongue
- good cross-referencing between guides and the students' book
- phonological explanations and exercises

The following is a selection of comments made by teachers in response to the section of the questionnaire which asked for further comments (question 19):

- Teachers prefer textbooks with teachers' guides since they

provide insights into language teaching.

- A teacher's book is useful in the sense that it will help teachers to improve their teaching techniques, enriching at the same time their teaching experience. So it's always useful, but just complementary.
- Most teacher's guides are dismally inadequate and written no doubt after the student text had been designed, as a last-ditch appeasement to the editors.
- There are not enough guide books available here.
- For an effective teacher's guide the suggestions must consider the real teaching situation relevant to the country.
- Most teachers' guides are theoretically sound but not practical.
- Many of the local teacher's guides are hastily prepared booklets that merely give answers to the objective questions. Many teachers hardly ever use them.
- A separate teacher book is less convenient than a combined guide. But a combined guide could lead teachers to rely too much on the teacher book. Both are necessary, with the separate teacher guide offering more theoretical background information.
- I use teacher's guides primarily for answers I'm not sure of, for example picture compositions which I do not always follow. Sometimes the answers which I really need are not there. All answers should be provided or suitable answers as different teachers need help in different areas presumably.
- Use of guides depends on experience of teaching and on how long you have used the book. But guides are essential for set textbooks which have to be finished in a limited period of time. Especially where there is more than one teacher teaching the same class or where a teacher might have to be substituted.
- *Headway* is a good example of a teacher's book (unusual) which analyses structural and conceptual problems and explains the theory behind the exercises.

### 3.3 Conclusions

We conclude from the results of the questionnaire that it is very likely that that teachers' guides are used extensively by teachers of all types in a wide range of teaching situations. There was a large measure of uniformity in the purposes to which the guides were put by all types of teachers. One predictable difference was that non-native-speaker teachers were more likely to rely on them for background information.

Section 1 summarized some of the major demands that communicative materials make on teachers. The survey indicates that teachers feel the burden of these demands and require assistance. As predicted, the support that is most urgently needed is of a practical nature. But it is significant that 42% of the total sample said they would like explanation of the theory behind exercises. This figure rises to 57% for the less experienced teachers.

There is nothing in our survey to suggest that teachers' guides should benefit one group of teachers more than another. It may be that certain types of teacher might make more use of particular types of information. But the results of the questionnaire suggest that all teachers stand to gain from improved guides. In short, we would suggest that most teachers regard guides as an essential source of information and support and would make even more use of them if they were improved. Although we must be cautious about making generalizations on the basis of this questionnaire, the data would seem to confirm Coleman's view (1985; see p.24 above) and the suspicion that teachers' guides might profitably receive more attention from materials writers than they do at the moment.

## 4 A framework for teachers' guides: some proposals

The aim in the first part of this section is to draw together all the factors which arguably should have an influence on the shape of teachers' guides. I shall list areas which in my view ought to be considered in the writing of any teachers' guide, together with indications of the scope of assistance required in these areas. My

purpose is to provide a framework to guide materials writers and help ensure that they give adequate support to teachers who use their materials.

In section 1 we considered the consequences of the communicative approach in terms of the demands it makes on teachers in the classroom. It was concluded that teachers would benefit from updated information on recent trends in linguistics and applied linguistics. It was argued that teachers needed to be skilled and knowledgeable users of the target language, whether they are native or non-native speakers of the language they are teaching; also that teachers need to establish different relationships in the classroom in order to create a good learning environment. This, of course, requires versatility in the roles the teacher can play and also sensitivity to learner expectations of classroom relationships. In order to make the best possible use of teaching methods and materials, teachers need not only to understand the rationale behind them but also to develop the skills required for their implementation. Our discussions indicated that, above all else, practical and immediately applicable advice for the classroom, its organization and management is a vital requirement for the effective use of communicative methods and materials.

Our discussions in section 2 led us to conclude that teachers' guides could make a valuable contribution towards meeting the demands for support that were outlined in section 1. But to be assured that the type of support they give is of maximum benefit, guides need to meet certain standards. One of the most important of these standards is that the guide should encourage a critical and questioning attitude on the part of teachers towards materials and methods. This has numerous other consequences for what we demand of a guide. For example, the guide should provide models, but it should not give the impression that these models are fixed and cannot be substituted or varied. The guide should satisfy the immediate needs of teachers, for instance through models, but it should also put teachers in a position where they will be able to adapt these models to deal with later requirements. Everything points to the fact that the stress in a guide should be on practical classroom-based support. But writers should not neglect to make clear the link between materials

and the theories behind them. In this way a source of knowledge is offered to teachers for their continued development. This is an essential idea behind learner-centredness and it is appropriate that a guide should itself embody methods that it encourages teachers to adopt.

The survey reported in section 3 indicated that it would be worthwhile giving more thought to teachers' guides, since teachers already use them and would use them more frequently if they were improved. This section also gave us more specific indications of the type of practical help that teachers require.

Below I attempt to draw a practical conclusion in the form of an outline of the basic features that should be found in teachers' guides. I do not wish to imply that there is a standard "correct" way of realizing these features, or that it would be appropriate for all teachers' guides to realize these features in the same way. Clearly, a guide aimed at particular teachers in a particular teaching situation will give priority to features directly relevant to that situation and will take into account the particular needs of that group of teachers. However, materials writers need at least to give some consideration to each of the features listed below.

### 4.1 The framework

| Basic features | The guide should: |
|---|---|
| **A Attitude to language** | 1 contain a summary of assumptions about language made in materials; |
| **B Attitude to language learning and teaching** | 1 provide detailed explanation of the approach taken to language learning and teaching;<br>2 make clear the implications of the approach for methodology; |
| **C Background information** | 1 give assistance on the cultural content of the materials;<br>2 supply all necessary information on content for the completion of |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | tasks in the materials; |
| **D Linguistic information** | 1 | provide all necessary linguistic information for the completion of tasks in the materials; |
| | 2 | add elaborated linguistic explanation as a teacher resource; |
| **E Rationale for methodology** | 1 | explain the reasons for including a particular technique, activity or exercise in the materials; |
| | 2 | make a clear statement of the aims of individual sections; |
| **F Implementation** | 1 | give advice on various forms of classroom organization, suitable to tasks and activities in the materials; |
| | 2 | give advice on teacher role variation according to activity type; |
| | 3 | give advice on how to achieve productive classroom relationships; |
| | 4 | give guidelines on how best to conduct exercise types; |
| **G Evaluation** | 1 | provide a complete answer key; |
| | 2 | give assistance for the assessment of learners' responses to open-ended activities; |
| **H Usability** | 1 | be written in accessible language; |
| | 2 | be presented in an accessible format; |
| | 3 | provide clear cross-references between the guide and the materials; |





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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 4 | give clear indications of alternative routes through the materials; |
| **I Supplementary work** | 1 | include exercises for extending work on materials; |
| | 2 | give guidance for going beyond the materials; |
| **J Practical effort** | 1 | include tapescripts where appropriate; |
| | 2 | include materials for tests where appropriate. |

**4.2 A survey of current guides**

Current guides may not include all of the basic features that we outlined in the framework, yet as the table below indicates, many guides contain a number of them. Here we seek to identify which of the features are adequately covered in a range of available guides, which of the features are covered but not in a wholly satisfactory way, and (most importantly) which, if any, are largely neglected.

The guides surveyed accompany a broad selection of coursebooks. They cover general English language teaching and English for Academic Purposes. They include books aimed at adolescents as well as adults and extend from beginner level through intermediate to advanced level. Most of the books are aimed at teachers in more than one country, but we include one national textbook (*Steps to English*, written for Moroccan secondary education).

In the table below the guides are listed along the top line. The full reference for each book is included in the references. Along the vertical axis we list the basic features from the framework for teachers' guides set out above. An X indicates that a guide contains a particular feature in some form or other. To some degree this system is arbitrary because in many cases a feature may not be explicitly mentioned, or if it is, the mention may be only a fleeting one.

A large number of the guides we surveyed pay attention to the following features: attitudes to language learning and teaching;

information on content for the completion of tasks in the materials; guidelines on how to conduct exercises; the language and format the guides are presented in. On the other hand, very few guides have the following features: assistance with cultural content; additional explanation of linguistic problems for teachers; ideas on how to fulfil different roles and achieve productive relationships in the classroom; suggestions for evaluating learners' answers to open-ended questions; alternative routes through the materials; ideas for extra exercises, either on or outside the materials themselves; materials for tests.

**4.3 The presentation of basic features in existing guides**

The chart on p. 41 should be read in conjunction with check-list of features on pp.37ff. The chart shows that many of the guides reviewed contain some indication of the assumptions about the nature of language, language learning and language teaching made in the materials. However, the manner in which they do this is very varied. On the one hand, *Steps to English* (Ministère de l'Education Nationale, Royaume du Maroc, 1981, p.6) does not elaborate on its approach to language except to say that it is concerned with English as a language of international communication. It also mentions that the language taught should be "real" language and "not an artificial classroom construct". A potentially more useful explanation of approach to theory is to be found in the general introduction of the teachers' manual of the *Follow Me* course (Alexander & Kingsbury 1979, pp.1-3). This goes further along the way to making clear to readers what principles of language learning and teaching lie behind the course. It sets out the basic ingredients of a functional-notional syllabus and explains the differences between this approach and a structural approach. Yet another example is provided by *Challenges* (Candlin & Edelhoff 1982, pp.1-52), which in its introduction to the teacher spends a great deal of time and space on theoretical considerations. The authors devote some of this long introductory section, for example, to describing in detail their view of "language as communication" (*ibid.*, pp.16-24). While it is quite likely that teachers would welcome this depth of theoretical explanation, and it would seem to fit the bill in terms of our framework, we would hesitate to

| BASIC FEATURES | | Reading for Academic Study | Cambridge English Course I | Steps To English | Communicate in Writing | Reading and Thinking in English II/IV | Functions of American English | Task Listening | Follow Me | Approaches | Building Strategies | Challenges | Panorama | Campus | Kaleidoscope | Headway |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 1 | | X | X | | X | X | | X | | X | X | | | | X |
| B | 1 | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | | X |
| | 2 | | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | | X |
| C | 1 | | X | | X | | | | | | | X | | X | X | |
| | 2 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | | X | | X |
| D | 1 | X | X | | X | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | X |
| | 2 | | X | | | | X | | X | | | | | | | X |
| E | 1 | | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | | X | | | | |
| | 2 | X | X | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | | X | | X |
| F | 1 | X | | | | X | | | X | X | | | | X | X | X |
| | 2 | X | | | | X | X | | | | | X | X | | | |
| | 3 | X | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| G | 1 | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | | | | X | X | | X |
| | 2 | | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | X | | |
| H | 1 | X | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | X | X |
| | 2 | X | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | | | X | X | | X |
| | 3 | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | | X | | | X | | |
| | 4 | | | | X | | | X | | X | | X | | | X | |
| I | 1 | X | X | | X | X | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| | 2 | | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | X | |
| J | 1 | NA | X | | NA | NA | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | NA | |
| | 2 | | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | X | | |

take *Challenges* as an ideal model since the language it is expressed in and the format seem rather inaccessible.

There seem to be two extremes in what guides can offer to teachers in this area. On the one hand information can be too vague and sparse to be of any use. On the other, there is a danger of confounding users with specialist jargon and unnecessary detail on polemical issues. A middle way between these two approaches needs to be found where teachers are given enough background information to make sense of the materials, to be able to judge the suitability of the materials, to further develop materials for their own purposes, and most importantly to be convinced of the fundamental approach behind the materials.

If the theory behind a course is adequately explained to teachers and the link between the theory and practice is made explicit, then we would expect that the rationale for the methodology (feature E) would also be transparent to teachers. The way in which *Challenges* (Candlin & Edelhoff 1982, p.21) sets out to show teachers the reasoning behind particular exercises in the students' book, seems to represent the direction that writers could take.

It is interesting to see that so few writers in our sample consider it necessary to explain cultural content. Clearly they do not foresee the kind of problem that Coleman (1985, p.89) observed in Indonesia, where the non-native-speaker teacher was asked to explain the word "cornflakes", which arose in the coursebook. The kind of sensitivity to cultural differences shown in *Cambridge English Course 1* (Swan & Walter 1984, pp.63 & 71) is a good example of how this feature might be dealt with. Another approach is to be seen in *Kaleidoscope* (Swan 1980, p.53), where detailed information is given about a particular aspect of British society.

It is striking that very few teachers' guides provide back-up linguistic explanation for teachers, over and above what is contained in the students' book. Some guides refer the teacher to reference books if they require further explanation, for example *Reading and Thinking in English* Book 4 (Moore 1980, p.xvii). *Headway* (Soars and Soars 1987) is an example of a guide which offers the teacher background information on grammar and vocabulary. In our

questionnaire teachers commented favourably on the fact that *Headway* anticipates student problems with language and advises teachers how to deal with these (*ibid.*, p.14). While it seems useful to refer them to works of reference, teachers seem to want more readily available information such as Headway offers.

As the survey shows, most guides in our sample offer some advice on how to conduct exercises in the students' book. However, many do not give advice on classroom organization and the vast majority offer no ideas on role variation and classroom relationships. *Reading for Academic Study* (University of Malaya 1979, pp.x-xiv) is exceptional in providing brief, accessible and appropriate notes on all of these areas. A particular feature of this guide is the use of symbols for suggested classroom organization and a diagram of seating arrangements. *Reading and Thinking in English*, Book 3 (Moore 1979, pp.xvii-xviii) gives useful hints on the role of the teacher and some ideas for classroom management.

It should perhaps be mentioned that some guides do not contain the answer key simply because it appears in the students' book. This seems a very acceptable alternative and is sometimes considered preferable to providing only the teacher with answers. However, most of the guides reviewed failed to provide much help for teachers in assessing open-ended tasks. If help is given it is generally in the form of a model answer. The only guide in this sample that goes further is *Campus* (Forman et al. forthcoming, pp.108 & 110), which provides a framework for the assessment of talks which teachers are encouraged to apply to other activities later in the section.

It is our view that teachers' guides can only benefit from particular attention to layout. Even if many of the other features of the framework are present, poor layout can hinder teachers' access to the information. On the other hand, clear layout encourages teachers to make maximum use of the guide. An example is *Cambridge English Course 1* (Swan and Walter 1984, p.72), where the teachers' guide is interleaved with the students' book and cross-reference is easy.

Few of the guides make any serious attempt to indicate alternative routes through the materials. One exception to this is *Challenges* (Candlin and Edelhoff 1982, pp.36-37), which is at pains to stress that

it is not only possible but also desirable to take different routes through the materials. In the notes for each unit there is a unit chart which provides indications of possible main routes through the materials and examples of possible alternative routes. *Communicate in Writing* (Johnson 1981, pp.7f.) gives much briefer advice on how the teacher might proceed through the book with different types of students.

The writers of the guides in our sample clearly do not feel that it is necessary to offer much in the way of extension exercises or ideas for going beyond the materials. Those that do, tend to include in the students' book exercises which may be left out without affecting the flow of the materials, and they give instructions on how and when to insert them in the teachers' guide. Examples of teachers' guides which follow this policy are *Reading for Academic Study* (University of Malaya 1979), *Communicate in Writing* (Johnson 1981) and *Challenges* (Candlin & Edelhoff 1982).

It is probably easier to give specific suggestions for helping students to transfer classroom-learned skills to the outside world when teaching English for Specific Purposes, simply because students' needs are more easily defined in these situations. In teachers' guides which accompany more general coursebooks, the instructions for this sort of activity tend to be more vague and so more difficult to implement.

The framework put forward in this section could be useful for two purposes. First, it could be of use to teachers and course planners who have to select course books for use with classes, supplementing existing checklists for the evaluation of textbooks (e.g. Grant 1987, p.124; Sheldon 1988, pp.237-246; Cunningsworth 1984, pp.74-79) which focus mainly on students' books. Secondly, it could be used by materials writers who might wish to refer to it when deciding which features they should include in a guide and what aspects of these features are important for their particular course book.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire on the use of teachers' guides to English language coursebooks

Please tick ( ) the most appropriate answer for each of the following questions. For some questions you may tick more than one answer if you wish.

**Section A: Teacher's background**

1 How many years have you been teaching English language?
0-5 years .... 6-10 years .... 10-20 years .... over 20 years ....

2 Are you a native speaker of English?
yes .... no ....

3 What qualifications have you got?
teacher training .... university degree ....
other (please specify) .....

4 Have you had any teacher training/re-training
within the last 5 years: yes .... no ....
within the last 10 years: yes .... no ....

5 Do you have access to books/periodicals on English teaching?
yes .... no ....

If yes, how many books/articles would you say you have read in the last 12 months?
0-5 .... 6-10 .... 11-20 .... over 20 ....

**Section B: Teaching styles**

6 How much English do *you* use in the classroom?
100% .... 75% .... 50% .... 25% ....

7 Do students in your classroom speak English *to each other*
often? .... sometimes? .... never? ....

8 What seating arrangement(s) do you use in your classroom?
rows .... horse-shoe .... groups/pairs ....

other (please specify) .....

9 Do you use the following activities in your teaching? (Tick as many as appropriate)

... reading authentic texts
... skimming and scanning
... reading for main points
... reading comprehension questions
... pre-listening/reading questions
... listening to authentic texts
... oral drills
... vocabulary exercises
... guessing meaning of words from context
... summary writing
... substitution drills
... dictation
... grammar exercises
... choral repetition
... role-plays/simulations
... listening for gist
... drama
... pair/group discussion
... self-access work
... project work
... prediction exercises

10 What teaching materials do you generally use? (Tick as many as appropriate.)

| | Titles |
|---|---|
| ... prescribed textbook(s) | ..... |
| | ..... |
| | ..... |
| ... textbook(s) of your choice | ..... |
| | ..... |
| | ..... |
| ... newspapers/magazines | ..... |
| | ..... |
| | ..... |
| ... other (please specify) | ..... |
| | ..... |
| | ..... |

**Section C: Using teachers' guides**

11 Are teachers' guides available for any textbooks you use?
yes .... no ....
If your answer to question 11 is "no", please ignore the rest of Section C and go directly to Section D.

12 (a) How often do you use the guide(s)?
.... every day .... once or twice a week

.... once or twice a term .... never

(b) If your answer to 12 (a) is "never", why don't you use teachers' guides?

.... because I don't feel I need a guide
.... because the guide(s) doesn't contain what I need
.... other (please specify) .....

If your answer to question 12 (a) is "never", please ignore the rest of Section C and go directly to Section D.

13 When do you use the guide(s)? (Tick both if necessary)
.... during lesson preparation .... in the classroom

14 (a) In general do you find that the guide(s) available to you is/are
.... very helpful .... helpful .... average
.... not very helpful .... unhelpful

(b) In general do you think that the guide(s) could be improved?
.... yes .... no

15 How do the teachers' guides help you? (Tick as many as appropriate)
They provide : ... answers to questions in the coursebook
... tapescripts for listening texts
... material for class tests
... ideas on how to use the coursebook
... extra exercises
... background information
... other (please specify) .....

**Section D: The ideal guide**

16 Who do you think teachers' guides could be helpful to? (Tick as many as appropriate)
.... inexperienced teachers .... non-native-speaker teachers
.... experienced teachers .... native-speaker teachers

17 Which of the following do you think are essential in a useful teachers' guide? (Tick as many as appropriate.)
... answers to questions in the coursebook
... tapescripts for listening exercises
... materials for class tests
... suggestions on how to use the coursebook

... background information
... suggestions for classroom management
... ideas for teaching and expanding vocabulary
... the theory behind exercises in the coursebook
... ideas for "stretching" stronger students
... ideas for helping weaker students
... summary of what students learn in each chapter
... guidelines for correcting written work
... suggestions for monitoring oral work
... further grammatical explanation
... ideas for activities outside the coursebook
... cross-references between chapters
... suggestions for making shortcuts in the coursebook
... other (please specify) .....
.....
.....

18 When would *you* expect to use a good teachers' guide? (Tick as many as appropriate.)
.... before lessons, during preparation
.... during lessons
.... not at all

19 If you have any other comments, please make them here
.....
.....
.....
.....

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION**

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**Autumn 1986**

17. Ailbhe Ní Chasaide& Eugene Davis, *A data-processing system for quantitative analysis in speech production* (28pp.)
18. Seán M. Devitt, *Learning a foreign language through the media* (69pp.)
19. Meriel Bloor & Thomas Bloor, *Languages for specific purposes: practice and theory* (34pp.)

**Spring 1988**

20. D. G. Little & D. M. Singleton, *Authentic materials and the role of fixed support in language teaching: towards a manual for language learners* (26pp.)

**Spring 1989**

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22. V. J. Cook, *The relevance of grammar in the applied linguistics of language teaching* (43pp.)

**Spring 1990**

23. Sera De Vriendt & Pete Van de Craen, *Bilingualism in Belgium: a history and an appraisal* (52pp.)
24. David Singleton, *The cross-linguistic factor in second language learning: a report on some small-scale studies recently conducted at the CLCS* (20pp.)

**Autumn 1990**

25. Paul Farrell, *Vocabulary in ESP: a lexical analysis of the English of electronics and a study of semi-technical vocabulary* (82pp.)
26. David Singleton, *The TCD Modern Languages Research Project: objectives, instruments and preliminary results* (19pp.)
27. Federica Scarpa, *Contrastive analysis and second language learners' errors: an analysis of C-test data elicited from beginners in Italian* (47pp.)

**Spring 1991**

28. Jennifer Ridley, *Strategic competence in second language performance: a study of four advanced learners* (95pp.)
29. Susan Abbey, *A case for on-going evaluation in English language teaching projects* (43pp.)

**Spring 1992**

30. Frank Donoghue, *Teachers' guides: a review of their function* (51pp.)
31. Barbara Byrne, *Relevance Theory and the language of advertising* (76pp.)



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